

Abstract 135

TITLE: AIDS In the Deaf Community

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ISSUE: HIV/AIDS continues to be a major problem in the deaf community. Although public health agencies do not record statistics regarding incidence of AIDS cases among the deaf, it is known that deaf people practice the same risk behaviors that cause hearing persons to become infected: primarily, unprotected sex and sharing of injecting drug paraphernalia with infected people. In the translation from English to sign language, HIV education loses something: LIVES.

SETTING: This would be primarily a "Train the Trainer " type of workshop geared to teaching people how to work with the deaf population.

PROJECT: In 1991 the CDC worked with a California agency and developed a curriculum for teaching deaf individuals about HIV and AIDS. After taking this program and later sponsoring the program when it came to Atlanta, I conducted HIV prevention programs in Georgia for nearly 8 years. This workshop would seek to recruit individuals interested in becoming educators to the deaf community and train them to do HIV prevention.

RESULTS: We have learned over the years that "More than seventy percent of deaf people consider American Sign Language (ASL)their first language and English their second. "(Scott Pott, president of the National Coalition of the deaf Community and HIV). Hearing people often don 't realize the need to be culturally sensitive to this minority because it doesn 't occur to them that this is another culture.

LESSONS LEARNED: AIDS Education programming needs to be conducted in ASL and in a culturally sensitive manner to reach the deaf and hard of hearing persons at their own levels. The concept of "Training the Trainer " is not a new one and will certainly work as a goal of this particular session. The techniques taught in this workshop have been tested and proved to be an effective method of teaching deaf about HIV prevention. Therefore this "Training the Trainer" workshop can and will be effective. (a) Hearing and Deaf participants will learn about resources available to them for teaching the deaf about HIV transmission and risk reduction. (b) Hearing and Deaf participants will learn through this "Train the Trainer " session how to use "tools" that are available to them from their own home or office. (c) Participants will learn appropriate sexual signs and terms, which will give them a greater insight into the deaf culture and the people who live in it. (d) Participants will learn how to "get into the deaf communities " and find people at risk for HIV transmission (i. e. via local gatekeepers, deaf organizations, TTY and telephone relay services, etc.)

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